GRAND PRAIRIE, TEXAS

United States Environmental Protection Agency

September 1, 2009

This Fact Sheet will tell you about..

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Background

At a community meeting in Grand Prairie, Texas, in September 2008, the community expressed to the U.S. Environmental Protection (EPA) staff their concerns about potential exposure to trichloroethylene (TCE) vapors from contaminated groundwater in several areas in Grand Prairie. The community also expressed concerns about the possible source(s) of the contamination.

In response to the community concerns, in late 2008 and early 2009, EPA collected soil gas samples and indoor air samples in three areas of Grand Prairie (Southeast 14th Street, Northeast 15th Street, and Delfasco Forge Site neighborhoods) where there was suspected potential impact from contaminated groundwater.

Southeast 14th Street Contaminated Groundwater and Northeast 15th Street Contaminated Groundwater Areas

EPA installed 115 soil gas samplers in the Southeast 14th Street area and 203 soil gas samplers in the Northeast 15th Street area. All of the soil gas samplers remained in the ground for over a week and after their removal the samplers were sent to a laboratory. The results were analyzed to determine the amount of trichloroethylene in the soil. The sampling and analysis results from both neighborhoods showed that low levels of trichloroethylene were found in the soil gas samples.

Based upon the data collected from both locations, the majority of homes in both areas had low levels of trichloroethylene in indoor air requiring no mitigation by EPA of the indoor air. Based on comparison of the trichloroethylene levels in the soil gas and indoor air, to the levels known to cause health effects, the trichloroethylene levels found would not be expected to affect the health of the people who live in these homes.

Delfasco Forge Site

At the Delfasco Forge Site, EPA collected indoor air samples from several homes and installed approximately 100 soil gas samplers in the right-of-ways from Main and NE 28th Streets to Rinehart and NE 31st Streets. The soil gas samplers remained in the ground for over a week. After their removal, the samplers were sent to a laboratory. The results were analyzed to determine the amount of trichloroethylene in the soil.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality recently established a protective concentration level of 12 ug/m^3 of trichloroethylene in indoor air. Although EPA is still in the process of developing its own toxicity values for trichloroethylene in indoor air, the current best available scientific research indicates that homes with concentrations between 1.2 ug/m^3 and 10 ug/m^3 should be evaluated for mitigation due to the potential for increased cancer risk from long-term (30-year) exposure to trichloroethylene at these concentrations, and that concentrations above 10 ug/m^3 should be evaluated for mitigation due to potential non-cancer health effects from short-term (7-year) exposure.

Based upon the data collected from the Delfasco Forge Site, some homes will require mitigation to reduce trichloroethylene concentrations in the indoor air. To limit exposure and to reduce trichloroethylene concentrations, EPA is offering to install exhaust fans

in homes that had, or are expected to have, elevated trichloroethylene levels in indoor air.

The exhaust fans are different for each type of housing construction:

- For homes with crawl spaces (the majority of homes in the area), a crawl space exhaust fan can be used.
- For homes built on a slab, a radon-type fan that pulls a vacuum on the soil below the slab to remove the vapors directly from the soil can be used.

There are two methods for powering each exhaust fan:

- One exhaust fan can be connected to the home's electrical power and run 24 hours a day with a cost to the residents of $3 to $8 per month;
- The other fan installation option is a solar powered fan that only operates when the sun is out and has no connection to the home's electrical system; and

If other homeowners want to install exhaust fans in their own homes they can find information about exhaust fans from local home improvement stores or search for "crawl space exhaust fans" on the internet.

EPA will continue to pursue future actions at the Delfasco Forge Site to protect public health and the environment.

What You Should Know About TCE Vapor Intrusion

At the Delfasco Forge site, EPA determined that vapors detected in the homes were a result of trichloroethylene contamination in groundwater. In other circumstances, exposure to trichloroethylene can be from many sources, including solvents used to remove grease from automotive parts, other metal parts, and household and consumer products (such as typewriter correction fluid, paint removers, adhesives, and spot removers). To reduce your potential exposure to trichloroethylene, you can:

- Store unused chemicals in tightly sealed containers;
- Use products containing trichloroethylene in well ventilated areas;
- Make sure that crawlspace vents on your home are open and not blocked;
- Make sure that louvers on crawlspace vents are in good working condition and are not bent; and
- Let fresh air into your home to help prevent the buildup of chemicals in the air.

If you have any concerns about your health, you should check with your personal physician. If your doctor would like additional information about trichloroethylene, he or she can contact the Texas Department of State Health Services at 1.800.588.1248.

Where to get more information …

Greg Fife, U. S. EPA
On-Scene Coordinator
214.665.6773 or 1.800.533.3508 (Toll-free)
fife.greg@epa.gov

Bret Kendrick, U.S. EPA
Site Assessment Manager
214.665.2240 of 1.800.533.3508 (Toll-free)
Email?

Stephen Harper, U.S. EPA
Community Involvement Coordinator/SEE
214.665.2727 or 1.800.533.3508 (Toll-free)
harper.stephen@epa.gov

For press inquiries, please call the Region 6 Press Office at 214.665.2208.

You can find more information about the Region 6 Superfund program on EPA's Region 6 website: http://www.epa.gov/region6/superfund

Information Repositories

Bowles Branch Library
2705 Graham Street
Grand Prairie TX 75050
972.237.7541

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Building E, Records Management, 1st Floor
12100 Park 35 Circle
Austin, TX 78753
512.239.2920